

Foe' Of Voodoo To Be Buried In Gold Crown

Advertisement

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While she was leading prayer services last night in her church, St. Michael's Temple No. 1, for the negro brothers and sisters and white visiting friends, she began to sing "I Want To Live So God Can Use Me."

She was seized with a stroke and fell to the floor. White-gowned, bare-footed sisters rushed her to a hospital but she never spoke again.

Fifteen years ago Mother Kate, a washwoman then, was ironing for white folks up town when she heard a voice say "Got to stop that and start working for God." She did.

She opened Temple No. 1 because she knew other temples would follow. They did. When her followers became powerful "healers" like herself, she crowned them with a gilt crown and let them set up their own temples. She herself acquired a gold crown somewhere, a bereaved friend said. The crown and the character came from "the New Nited States."

Mother Kate's religious services, to which whites were as welcome as negroes, were a mixture of many creeds but all participants went barefooted.

"Shake your feet free to show you're with Him," Mother Kate used to say. She paraded Rampart Street, bare-footed and in a huge purple gown. She said she could dispel hoodoo, voodoo and evil charms and kept bottles in which she said she locked up demons found under doorsteps. The demons resembled dilapidated snails. Nevertheless she had a big following.

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Time Fails To Banish Fears Of the Louisiana Bayou Folk For Ghosts and Werewolves

Such Spirits Still Scare the Daylights Out of the
Cajuns, the Federal Writers Project Discovers
In Series of Interviews With Natives

By JAMES MARLOW
By The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS, July 22.—Even big-hearted Santa Claus may be losing ground in the rest of this skeptical, modern world, but in Louisiana ghosts, witches and werewolves still scare the daylight out of some people who look for mermaids and believe cows and mules kneel down to pray.

By a series of interviews here, the Federal Writers' Project has just "discovered" that werewolves on picnics fly through the air, salt burns a witch's skin like fire, and the best way to bring a ghost to his senses is to slap him on the back had a woman artist draw her contemplation of a werewolf get-together.

A recommended method of em-barrassing any ghost is to talk looking loup-garous, one doing a Latin to him. This confuses him veil dance with a towel, one wear- and he leaves the room. Just asing polka-dotted pants and no effective, and requiring less effort, shirt, and a third with hairy legs is to hang a flour sifter at the foot doing the Susy Q.

of the bed before going to sleep. The combined effect would have A ghost wandering in will see the charmed heart of a surrealist sifter and immediately start count-artist. ing the holes. This is an all-night A young man who had just slept job for any ghost and before the off a bender was shown the pic- count is finished it will be daylight, ture. which is the time ghosts depart.

Other Ways Recommended my room last night. They had a convention there but I woke up before I found out who got elected.

Other recommended, although not guaranteed, ways of playing safe with ghosts and witches: If you see one, turn around three times and spit. Scatter black pepper around the bed, although a bottle of salt works wonders. You can take a ghost's breath away by turning your pockets inside out.

Eat three garlic bulbs on the tenth of November. Whistle in the dark; lay a broom across the doorsill.

Hold the hand of a little child when passing a graveyard. Investigators have learned that ghosts are often bashful, some talk a lot, and a few are even easy to get along with. Most of the time they wander around quiet-like, sort of mumbling to themselves like a man who forgot where he left his watch.

Ghosts Are Busy In Louisiana, where ghosts apparently are pretty busy in a sort of simple-minded, harmless way, werewolves, called loup-garous (loogaroos), are the really tough creatures of the spirit world.

It also has been pretty definitely established that werewolves are sometimes erroneously confused with those busybodies who haunt wolves in Louisiana, and celebrations are held all around this section, some come all the way from New Orleans to participate.

The Writers Project recently "The legend of the werewolf was

first brought to the state by the French and Spanish settlers whose own countries abound with beliefs they seen them an' I seen them in the nocturnal meanderings of side shows, but that sho was a dis- animals with devil-ridden human appointment to me 'cause I wanted like that. An' when this old man souls. When they heard the Indian to bring one of them mermaids an' legends of transformation, they flyin' horses home with me. concluded, and rightly, that they "Lord, at that hospital they got were still liable to the power of the more spirits than live people loup-garous."

In Europe, the belief in were-wolves is still an active, and some- times terrible, force. Murders have been committed and people are sup- posed to be suddenly smitten with a wolf-fever that sends them howl- ing naked to the forests. Their hair and nails grow and they whine in the woods like any wolf.

Residents Interviewed

But here are some samples of what the Writers Project found by interviewing residents of New Or- leans, starting with Amy Guidry, living on the batture (levee):

"Listen, honey, Ise wuz born in de country an' dat's de place where yo reely does sees de ghoses. De reel night to see de ghoses is on All Saints' Night (Nov. 1)—dat is de night when de ghoses walk. Ise members well how my maw usta to keep us chillun in on All Saints' Night becus de sperrits wuz walk- in', just a-cryin' an' a-carryin' on fittin' to scare yo half to deat' iffent yos as much as put yo foot outside de do'.

And It Happened

"Yo see, it is on de All Saints' Night dat de cows an' de mules cryde an' pray. When we wuz in de coun- try my maw wouldn't let us chillun go in de back of de house becus iffent you saw de cows an' mules cryin' an' prayin' it meant dat sumtin' bad wuz goin' to happen to yo or somebuddy in yo family.

"Ise knows dat dis is true becus just doan de road from us dere liv- a man dat t'ought he wuz brave an' all an' so he said dat he wuz goin' to watch de cows an' de mules cryin'. So he done went an' did it an' vo know whut happen?

"Well, de nex' day he cam' on back an' tol' us how he wuz a-watchin' de cows an' de mules down on dere laigs prayin' an' de ghoses ob udder cows an' mules walkin' aroun' dem, an' den to know whut happen to him? About a week afta he wuz foun' in de woods daid an' he wuz kneeelin' doan an' dere wuzn' anudder mark on him.

Wanted To Keep One

"Lots of men on the boats said find them. He was killing people in right an' left. The police even shot at him. He disappeared jest like that. An' when this old man died he even buried himself one night."

Another: "There was an old woman on Allen Street who turned to a long black dog. She ran after every- body in that neighborhood. And this: "Old Suzanne was the ugliest woman I ever seen. One night she changed into a ball of fire an' went to a old couple's house, stood by their bed, an' changed into a wolf. They was prepared an' threw a sack of salt on her. It burn her so that she screamed 'You is settin' me on fire.' She started to shake an' that wolf's skin fell right off her. They was so mad they stripped her naked an' took her in the yard an' cowed her."

Here are some of interviews on werewolves:

"Loup-garous is them people who wants to do bad work an' changes themselves to wolves. They had the big red eyes, pointed nose, an' ev- erything jest like a wolf. They even had hair on the inside of their hands, an' long nails. They went around snoopin' just like cats.

Like To Cross River

"... They would never change themselves till 12 o'clock at night. That was devil's work, 'cause when they would change there was a ball of fire an' they would shoot out of de chimley, leavin' a cloud of smoke behind. Whenever you saw smoke comin' out a chimley at night you knew that a loup-garou had gone across de ribber. I don't know why but they always liked to go on the other side of de ribber.

"Men and women loup-garous would set in trees and throw all kinds of things at you when you passed. The loup-garous used to have big balls at Bayou Goula. My sister saw them. They used to dance under the platform where the hay was tied in bundles for dryin'. They used to dance and carry on like animals. When they would make too much noise, the people would throw a frog at them an' they would fly away."

Here's another sample: "Them loup-garous was all sizes, even children changed into wolves. You could shoot at them an' the bullet would go right through their skin an' they would turn back an' laugh at you. One of my paw's friends tried to shoot a bunch of about 20 when they was havin' a meetin', but he couldn't do it. A few nights later that man disap- peared from his house. Everybody knew that the loup-garous took him off an' kilt him."

Man Buried Himself

And another: "There was a man who lived in an old shack. He never went any- where in the daytime, jest at night. My grandmother says at night he turned an' looked just like a wolf. One night this man or wolf grabbed

In Defense Of Voodoo

In Richmond, where the American Association for the Advancement of Science is holding its conclave, scientists have been discussing the case of the bouncing bed; in New York, where the American Anthropological Association is making a row, Haitian black magic has been a chief topic. Yesterday Dr. George E. Simpson, a sociologist who recently returned from Haiti, reported that the natives there receive definite psychological benefits from the Mumbo Jumbo which they practice.

There is much to be said for Dr. Simpson's view. The simple truth is that, for backward people everywhere, a little indulgence of the folk soul provides a satisfactory emotional outlet. It is more than entertainment; it is a sort of catharsis.

Haitians believe in an elaborate spirit world populated with zombies, hougans and the like. The Virginian hill peasant believes in all sorts of bewitchments dating back to mediaeval Britain. The Pennsylvanians have their hexel, with beliefs as curious as a Durer etching of Death and the Devil. In Maryland, the Carolinas and all through the Low South the peasantry periodically indulge in emotional shakes and trances, holy-rolling and unknown tongues. All this does not improve their minds, but it gives them an opportunity to let off steam. Who can say that it has no therapeutic value? Certainly it is no worse than going on a corn-likker spree, and it is definitely better than a lynching party.

Dr. Simpson spent nine months in studying Haitian folk beliefs. His conclusion is that while the natives are sometimes exploited by "unscrupulous witch doctors," the psychological advantages outweigh the bad effects. We hope he will now turn his attention upon the American hinterland. Perhaps, after nine months of study, he would even discover why Mississippians believe that a horsehair placed in a bottle of water turns into a snake.—The Baltimore Evening Sun.

"VOODOOISM" JUST LIKE RELIGION, SCIENTIST SAYS

White Professor Debunks White Writers Who Have Sneered at Hatians

New York, Jan. 5—(CNA)—Science came to the defense of Voodooism this week, declaring it much like other religions in the emotional, religious and social benefits it accords its adherents.

Science Defends Haiti's Voodoo

Science came to the defense of voodooism this week, declaring it much like other religions in the emotional, religious and social benefits it accords its adherents.

Reading a paper on "Haitian Magic" before the American Anthropological Association, Dr. Geo. E. Simpson, white, assistant professor of sociology at Temple University, Philadelphia, took issue with many conceptions that have become prevalent in this country as a result of superficial "investigations" of voodooism by supercilious white writers seeking sensational material.

Dr. Simpson spent nearly nine months studying voodooism in Haiti. Later, questioned by reporters, Dr. Simpson refused to regard voodooism "as a pathological manifestation," but insisted it serves the main functions of any religion in providing "emotional relief" and escapism. Too voodooists, he declared, zombies and other supernatural beings seem "real" as the angels and devils in whom Christians believe.

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Later, questioned by reporters, Dr. Simpson refused to regard voodooism "as a pathological manifestation," but insisted it serves the main functions of any religion in providing "emotional relief" and escapism.

To Voodooists, he declared, zombies and other supernatural beings seem as queer as the angels and devils in whom Christians believe.

Some of the countries of Europe, organizing their national robots by old whites and Negroes who pay to be tribal cries translated into saps.

For anything, from two bits and 50 cents on up, the gullible goofs think they can control the dice, beat the cards, start a fight, have a neighbor, fan a hate, win a love or kill a rival.

good old days and Voodoo still flourishes despite the efforts of an enlightened government to suppress it. It is something more than the practice of medicine by emotion because the hougans, or witch doctors, are very powerful and must be propitiated for fear of the evil they will do.

Thus medicine assumes a political tinge. The hougans can even raise the dead and, indeed, do so frequently.

These dead are persons who have been killed by sorcery and resurrected to labor at the command and for the profit of their masters. They are called zombies and pursue a sad half-life of forgetfulness and toil. Many Haitians accept these zombies, together with the hougans who rule them, as necessary evils which simply have to be endured. A recent investigator in the island was actually introduced to a zombie who proved to be a woman with all the symptoms of amnesia. But because she had completely forgotten her past life she remained a zombie to her neighbors. Sometimes it seems that the population of the totalitarian States, having forgotten their freedom and their past, are nothing more than political zombies working for their local hougans.

VICTIMS STILL PAY TO BECOME SAPS

All Kinds Of Enchantments Available; Druggists

Laugh Up Sleeves
2-5-39
BY JAMES MARLOW

NEW ORLEANS—Voodoo — it's okay to call it hoodoo—started early in this town and still does a fat business in enchantments among whites and Negroes who pay to be

Modernized now, the real voodoo the natives are devoted to the kings and queens here are certain

white druggists and white and Ne-drawing money or people; black, gro fortune tellers and so-called always for death.

If the customer had sense, he would buy these candles in the 10-cent store where dealers and the voodoo practitioners buy them.

One of the most important and powerful of all voodoo gadgets is High John the Conqueror root, which is so gnarled, twisted and old looking it might impress you if you didn't know it was gentian root and that the dealer had a can full of the same thing behind the counter.

Some voodoo is vicious, most of it silly, but the literary boys always get purple when they write about it.

"I looked at that guy and I said: 'It got to be imported?'"

"And this guy says: 'The imported.' 'So I mix him some old brown powder I got lying around and I put some red coloring in it. I said: 'Boy, now is that?'"

"He said: 'Boss, that's the genuine.'"

"So I looked at him and I said: 'Boy, you're sure you know how to use this now?'"

"Yes, sir," he told me. "I want to break up with my old lady. She and me been gittin' along sour. I sprinkle a little of this dust in the toe of her shoe and when I wake up in the morning she be gone."

Much Magic Available
Here is some of the "magic" you can buy from these druggists:

Drawing powder, attraction powder, follow me powder, lady's love powder, get-together powder, love powder, lodestones with steel filings clinging to them to illustrate their magnetism, do as you please powder, stay home powder, move away powder, war water, war powder, mad powder, controlling powder, lucky powder, gambler's powder, lucky oil and easy life powder.

These powders, generally white, always harmless, are part of a stock-in-trade, anyway, and cost little. Sometimes they are mixed with a coloring.

Move away powder, thrown on the doorsteps of an undesirable neighbor, is to help him break his neck, or the roof to fall in, but anyway to make him move away.

Common pins, arranged in a circle on his doorstep, supposedly have the same effect.

War powder, distributed on the right person or in the right house, ought to start a nasty fight.

Controlling powder, attraction powder, and the rest, may be sprinkled on yourself or in the hatband, shoes or under the pillow of the object of your affections.

The oils are almost entirely water from the nearest faucet, plus a dash of some harmless oil and a drop of coloring and cheap perfume. These combinations are made on the spot according to the individual dealer's taste.

Very important also are the candles: White for peace, red for victory; pink, for love; green, for driving off evil spirits or rivals; blue, for success or protection; brown, for

Maybe the first slaves imported into Louisiana brought voodoo with them from the snake worshippers of Africa by way of the West Indies. For as far back as 1782 Spanish Gov. Galvez was complaining that the Negro slaves from Martinique were "too much given to voodooism and make the lives of citizens unsafe."

Police nowadays would call the traditional story of early voodoo in New Orleans—a midnight meeting of male and female slaves in a misty swamp on Lake Pontchartrain—a nice, drunken brawl.

The Ceremony
This is the cast and show of the legendary voodoo ceremony:

The king and queen of voodoo. A snake in a box, bucket or love soup bowl. . . . Too much to drink oil. The boys and girls getting dressed in red handkerchiefs only all hands. . . . Chanting for dear old voodoo. . . . Shouts of "Zombie zombie." . . . Jitterbug dancing. . . . Breaking up the furniture or anything handy.

Voodoo queening reached its peak in Marie Laveau, born of two mulattoes in 1827. For years around this town they used her name to scare little children. She modernized the racket and invited police and the press to her milder parties on St. John's Eve.

She has been called a procuress who dealt in charms supposed to ward off the dread "gris-gris" (pronounced gree-gree), which could be anything from a curse to salt on your doorstep or your name written on paper thrown into the Mississippi River in a pierced coconut shell.

(Hereabouts, gris-gris is a common word. Instead of saying "somebody put the jinx on you," to a losing gambler, baseball pitcher or even a carpenter who hit his thumb with a hammer, you say "Somebody put the gris-gris on you, pal!")

Marie died before this century began, but even now on dark nights, Fridays preferred, men and women scoop off her supposed grave a little dust that's alleged to be as good an eliminator as a pistol if sprinkled on a guy who gets in your hair.

All grave dust is called goofer dust.

Writer Finds Queen

Lyle Saxon, in his book "Fabulous New Orleans," says he had looked long for a queen in good working order. A little more than 10 years ago he found one, a fat epileptic who charged him \$10 and made him stand in his skin.

He went to her shack fully clothed and seeking a little first aid in a pretended love trouble. The fat queen soaked him \$5 extra to buy liquor for the Negro men and women in the room.

Fatty went into a trance, came out of it, and said something was all knotted up. She said Saxon had to get down to his underwear, which he did.

Fatty came out of another trance with the idea things were still in knots. Investigation disclosed a knot in a string keeping Saxon's underwear intact. Fatty said he would have to take off the underwear. Saxon did. He borrowed an old bathrobe from one of the boys or modesty's sake.

The queen worked a little of the usual hocus-pocus, sticking things in a doll supposed to represent Saxon's hated rival—and then had a fit.

Everybody, well-plastered by that time except Saxon, who didn't know what was coming off next, drank gumbo cooked in a pot with a snake.

They shouted "zombie" and got down to cases, smashing the furniture and one another.

Saxon scrambled, picking up his clothes on the way out.

This writer went looking for a voodoo queen of the 1939 variety.

I found one, a sort of dilapidated queen, a small, chubby white woman with greasy hair and a dirty face. One of the dealers told me where to find her. She buys voodoo knick-knacks from him such as oils and powders, or sends customers to him when she runs out of supplies. He sends customers to her. He told me beforehand what her routine was.

She charges two bits to tell fortunes and you can work up to the voodoo which costs as much as she thinks you can stand.

I went into her room, foggy with incense, and shyly asked if she'd "work" for me. "work" being the word for voodoo shenanigans.

"Ah," she said cautiously. "I really don't 'work.' I can pray for you."

Then I told her a story about a man running off with my girl.

"Well," said the lady with the dirty face. "I can work for you."

I told her I had to leave then, but would come back. Dirty face could provide war powder to break up the rival and the girl. Or she could give me a goofer dust. Or she might burn black candles to kill the rival in a hurry. Around the candles, nine of them, she would wrap a paper bearing the rival's name. When the candles burned down to the bitter end the paper would be consumed and the rival's light would go out.

The writer picked up a bowlegged friend for good luck and protection and sallied forth again.

He went to a so-called Negro church. It wasn't a church. It was a residence in one of the poorest sections of the city. The room

was jammed with about 40 Negroes on makeshift benches.

Bowlegs and I sat on the front bench with the 40 between us and the door. I began to feel bad right away.

"Father" so and so was preaching. He had a white surplice over his blue shirt and a long string of 10-cent store beads. As soon as we sat down "Father" began roaring:

"Anybody comin' here lookin' for the voodoo, lookin' for the hoodoo, they wrong. Anybody comin' here thinkin' I work the voodoo, thingin' I work the hoodoo, they wrong."

He looked at us. I thought he was pretty good.

He said: "I been Christian all my life. I born Christian in St. John Baptist parish. My mammy Christian. I grewed up. I been 'round. What the Good Book say? I been those places. I been to see where Adam and Eve in the Garden of Egypt. I come back. I die one Wednesday night. I be dead all one night. I rise up again. I here now. I cure the sick. I heal the blind. Little girl blind and deaf all her days. I see her. I touch her. Now she see, now she hear. I cure her. Girl been parlyzed all her days. I touch her. I cure her. Now she walk like me. That how come I got all that property down in Burax (A Louisiana town named Burax). Her daddy gimme."

The 40 followers were shouting "We knows it."

"Father," looking at me and my bowlegged friend, was breathing hard, working up a lather. He was roaring now and saliva was popping from his mouth.

"I kin tell the future and the past," he shouted, standing in front of us. "Anybody say I don't know the future, I kin't tell the past, they wrong. Anybody say I kin't tell the future, I kin't tell the past, I be all over them like gravy over rice."

That was when Bowlegs and I left.

One of the merriest dealers, who also thinks his customers are on the silly side and has been selling voodoo over his counter for years, has a jar with redfish eyes floating in alcohol. The label on the jar says "Eagle Eyes." They sell slowly—the druggist filled the jar eight years ago and still has four eyes left—but their price is \$5 and they are supposed to be wonderful for what ails you.

This dealer remembers best the customer who was in great need of a black cat's backbone. He said he'd pay \$5. The dealer sold it to him, although it was not a bone from a black cat. He excused himself for a minute, went to a restaurant a few doors away, picked up a turkey bone, burned it black over a gas flame and presented it to the delighted client.

Another dealer has troubles of his own. He is separated from his wife, who believes in voodoo. She won't give him a divorce. It makes him unhappy sometimes.

He said:

"One day one of these voodoo queens—she's a fortune teller the rest of the time—I been selling this stuff to for years calls me up and tells me she wants to see me. I think it's an order. I often drop

in at her place to pick up her orders for the day. So I stop in. She has two \$5 bills in her hand. She gives me one of them. She says, 'I think the only decent thing I can do is split with you. Your wife come in here yesterday and paid me \$5 to put the voodoo on you.'"

Clearwater, Fla. Sun

February 1, 1939

NEGRO FORTUNE TELLER CAN'T PREDICT HIS OWN BAD LUCK

A negro fortune teller with a diamond set in one of his teeth is back in the toils of the law again.

William Anthony George, the spiritualistic medium who has been predicting the fortunes of negro citizens of Clearwater, was unable to predict all the trouble he was getting into when he came here.

He was arrested yesterday afternoon and taken before Magistrate Leon Humphries on two charges, one for operating a business without a state and county license, the other for working in Florida without a Florida license. George held a rabbit's foot in his hand while talking with the judge.

Judge Humphries warned the apparently well educated negro that he would bind him over to County Court under \$300 bond, but relented providing he purchases the licenses.

George, who is driving a Lincoln Zephyr with a trailer, protested he only had 25 cents in his pocket. He decided differently however when he faced the possibility of going to jail. He wept when he paid the judge \$18 for costs of court. The money was in a wallet concealed by a zipper in his trousers.

The fortune teller paid his \$150 state and county license with a hundred dollar bill and notes of smaller denominations. He also purchased his \$15 automobile tag.

George was expensively dressed and more a green silk turban with a glittering mystic emblem on the front. At first he declined to remove the turban when he entered the court room, but there, too, he changed his mind.

Today George was arrested again, this time by city authorities for operating a business without a city license. A city license costs \$250 for a fortune teller.

George, who has been dubbed

"Prince Ali Bendo" by officers,

said he did not have the necessary ready cash to put up all his bond. He produced \$40 in bills, and posted his gold-banded wrist watch, diamond stickpin and diamond ring as the \$100 bail.

Police did not ask him for his diamond tooth.

Voodoo Man Held As 'Evil Genius' In Insurance Deaths

If Information Is True, Case Will Make Bluebeard Look

Pale, Police Say

PHILADELPHIA—(P)—A heavy-set little tailor from Philadelphia's teeming Latin Quarter, described by detectives as a witchcraft practitioner who conversed with "Old Nick himself," was held without bail Saturday for Grand Jury action on charges he was the "evil genius" of a widespread plot to murder for insurance.

Witnesses unfolded at a magistrate's hearing a bizarre tale of "black magic" conjured in what investigators said was a conspiracy to kill persons in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania after placing insurance on their lives. Poison was the chief weapon of the plotters, authorities charge.

"If information now in our hands is true, this case will make the famous Bluebeard murders in France some years ago pale to insignificance," Detective Sergt. Samuel Riccardi told Magistrate Nathar Beifel.

The magistrate held the stocky tailor, Paul Petrillo, 45, and bespectacled, on charges of conspiracy to kill and soliciting to commit murder.

Principal witnesses against Petrillo were a 27-year-old convict nephew and George Meyers, who was found recently, trussed and nearly frozen, in a snow-covered vacant lot after receiving anonymous threats.

John Cacopardo, serving a 30-year-to-life term in Sing Sing Prison for slaying a woman, blinked through heavy lenses and accused Petrillo

of inviting him into a murder ring. The convict was brought from New York with the permission of authorities there.

Sergt. Riccardi told the magistrate that Petrillo, described by Asst. Dist. Atty. Vincent P. McDewitt as the "evil genius" of a plot to kill "at least 10 persons for \$100,000 insurance," was a practitioner of "fatuoro," an Italian-American term for witchcraft.

He said the tailor learned the "evil eve" from a Negro "seeress" at 50 cents a lesson and insisted he could "talk with Old Nick himself."

Two women and Herman Petrillo, the tailor's cousin, also are charged with conspiracy.

SUPERSTITION- 1939

Nashville, Tenn. Tennessee
March 12, 1939

Spring Just Around Corner, And Herb Business Is Rushing

Potent Love Potions, With Sprinkling of Voodooism, in Great Demand in Nashville By White Residents as Well as Black

By CHARLES N. SMITH

That poetical business about Spring, young men and thoughts of love, coupled with the fact that it is March and Spring is about to make her 1939 debut, prompted a sort of inquisitorial survey of Nashville yesterday.

The net result was the discovery that the lyricist fell a bit short in his summation of the situation. In fact, it appeared women are even more interested in prodding Cupid into action.

HERBS FOR HERBY

Neither sex, however, seems willing to wait for Spring to produce the desired effect but resort to a great deal to such subtle aids as herbs, love potions, amulets, charms and just plain voodoo.

Several stores in widely separated sections of the city cater to those who seek to assist Cupid in his work. But, as one dealer said, they carry these things in stock because they are in demand.

"And the peculiar part of it to me," he said, "is that there seems to be just as great demand for those things from white people as from Negroes."

SEEK HEALTH AND LUCK

But those who resort to the use of herbs and potions are not all seeking romance. Some are seeking a cure for ailments, imaginary and real, and some are merely in search of good fortune.

Springtime herbs are traditional, and still the most popular one is sassafras. Nearly every pharmacist in the city reported some calls for this, because sassafras has the reputation of preventing colds and other spring ailments.

But most of those which are bought are not so well known, and what they are supposed to do is even more mysterious. For instance, there is mandrake. The only known result of the use of this herb, said a Jefferson Street pharmacist, is to contract the pupils of the eyes.

VOODOO JOG

"Most of those who buy mandrake," said this pharmacist, "use it during religious rituals, and some

of those rituals border on voodoo.

"During the ritual the leader drinks a mandrake potion and the pupils of his eyes contract. That, of course, makes the whites of the eyes larger and immediately, when the worshippers see that, they think that he has the spirit in him and they are overcome with fervor.

"And that is when the leader gets in his best work. It is a money-making proposition."

Most of these "voodoo" sessions revolve about the desires of the worshippers for romance. Once the "spirit gets in them" anyone of a number of things is likely to happen.

WOULD DRAGON ATTRACT

The leader may resort to the use of dragon's blood, a red powder which he burns to attract Cupid. Or he may make a potion with John the Conquerer root. Or he may utilize gensing root to brew his love draught.

Dragon's blood may be obtained in almost any drug store. Its most common use is not for voodoo, nor even for medicinal purposes, but to coat zinc engravings which are used to reproduce pictures in newspapers and magazines.

John the Conquerer root is no especial kind of root, but merely is supposed to have been blessed by the Goddess of Love.

'LUCKY OIL' TOO

The other day a woman walked into a Cedar Street drug store and ordered some "lucky oil." The druggist scratched his head in puzzlement and finally asked, "What is that?"

"You know," the woman replied, "some of that oil I can put in my washing to drive the lonely spirits from me."

The druggist, being a newcomer to the South from Chicago, didn't know what to do, so he went back of the prescription counter, mixed up a solution of chlorol, a deodorant, and sold it to her. She went away completely satisfied.

While your correspondent was looking the situation over a Negro woman walked into a Jefferson Street drug store and demanded "some blessed cards."

NO 'BLESSED CARDS'

To the druggist's puzzled query she explained: "I'm going to tell my boy friend's fortune and I want blessed cards so they'll come out right and make him marry me. I been waitin' long enough for him."

Unfortunately, no "blessed cards" were in stock and the Negro woman had to go elsewhere.

But those who want Chinese "Fu Fu Tan" have little trouble in finding them, for they are in such demand that most of the druggists in North Nashville's Negro district stock them.

Fu Fu Tan looks like an ordinary tallow candle, but it carries a paper band which shows that it has the blessings of the gods and will bring good fortune.

BASED ON DREAMS

"The use of Fu Fu Tan," said a Cedar Street dealer, "is based on dreams. 'Say you dream of a black cat with a gray eye and white tail. You consult Fu Fu Tan and find that it means there is to be a marriage."

"If you are single you write the name of your boy friend or girl friend on a piece of paper, place it under the candle and light the wick. Let the candle burn for 10 minutes, or as long as is necessary to make the tallow run, but the minute that the first melted tallow runs down on the paper put out the candle. Then your romance will culminate in an early marriage."

"Or the dream might represent a number. Then write the number on a piece of paper and go through the same process and the number will 'come out' in the numbers game and you will win."

PARTIES HELD

Fu Fu Tan parties are regular things in the Negro district, the dealer said.

Much faith is put in "Four In One" by those seeking romance in the springtime, said a Twelfth Avenue, North, dealer.

"Four In One" includes "blessed incense," John the Conquerer root, true love perfume which the romantically-inclined person cannot resist, and magic oil, the latter to be dabbed in a spot just between the eyes as an irresistible lure.

Out in North Nashville is an elderly Negro woman who practices a modified "voodoo," particularly to drive away evil spirits which cause sickness. She is known as "Aunt Bitsy," probably because she weighs slightly more than 300 pounds.

HAS ALL ANSWERS

Just complain of a headache in her presence and she's off. Or mention something about being thwart-

ed in love and she will produce a remedy.

To cure a headache she sits the "patient" in a straight-backed chair, lights some dragon's blood in a small container on the floor at the feet, then with hands gesticulating wildly to emphasize her words she mutters some mumbo-jumbo which can't be understood.

Usually, the headache disappears because the "patient" becomes so uneasy that he wants to make a quick escape. The cure for thwarted love is very much the same, except the "patient" has to hold the burning dragon's blood in his hands during the seance.

VOODOO SANCTIFIED

Other popular herbs with white bark and with Negro are wild cherry bark, horehound root, tansy and ginseng. The latter, although it grows in Tennessee, is not considered "holy" until it has made a long round-trip to China for blessing or to the West Indies to be sanctified by the voodoo priests and priestesses.

"And the funniest thing about it," said a Jefferson Street druggist, "is that those who resort to these herbs, both as health cures and as aids to Cupid, are not just the poorer residents."

"We have customers drive up in front of the store in expensive automobiles and wearing costly clothes."

SOMETHING TO IT?

"Maybe there is something in that business, after all. Some day I am going to try it to find out."

"I do know this, though, that many of our modern medicines are the direct result of voodoo and witchcraft. For instance, there was an old superstition that to cure a child of rickets it was necessary to feed him the broth made from frog boiled in water and seasoned well. Since then we have learned that frogs are rich in Vitamin D."

"And the medical profession has learned that many diseases which were cured formerly by witchcraft are purely the result of a mental condition which can be mended by specified treatment and rest."

Greenville, S. C. News
March 28, 1939

Dean Is Not Behind Sale Of Medals Here

Father Sidney Dean, assistant rector of St. Mary's Catholic church, said yesterday that reports had reached him that two women were selling medals in negro districts of the city and using his name in connection with the sales.

He said that he had authorized no such use of his name and asked that anyone hearing of such sales inform him as soon as possible. He said the medals were being sold on the contention that they would ward off sickness.

Superstition And Fear Vs. The Science Of Medicine

In medieval times the art of healing was composed largely of superstitions, and there was little to distinguish it from witchcraft. There were a few effective remedies which had been developed through trial and error. The witch doctors of primitive jungle tribes also have found a few remedies later adopted by civilized man such as aspirin and quinine.

Gradually the practice of medicine developed into a science, and superstition and mysticism were displaced by facts which could be substantiated. During the process thousands of theories have been advanced, but only those which could be verified by application survived. At times it has been difficult to get scientific facts established. The classic example of Louis Pasteur's fight is the most familiar instance of resistance to a new concept.

But despite the advance of medicine, and the fact that it is today based on truths and practices as precise almost as the science of mathematics, many people continue to hold to superstition.

Almost simultaneously there appeared in the newspapers an article by Dr. J. N. Baker, state health officer, who warned against the acceptance of superstitions and "old sayings," and a news item telling of the fleecing of a Negro woman by a band of gypsies who promised to cure her illness in a way that combined magical symbolism and a midnight visit to the cemetery.

Dr. Baker cited the wearing of an iron ring to ward off rheumatism and pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth to stop a headache as examples of "folk" remedies which continue to have a following. Various types of hocus-pocus techniques are still employed in an effort to get rid of

warts. Voodooism is still practiced by thousands of people in this country, but it is used more in romance and picking winning horses than in healing. Love and horse-racing are more elusive elements than a case of measles or a sprained ankle. The individual is more inclined to take another chance in the first two than in the latter.

As education conquers ignorance, superstition and fear will be supplanted by faith in medical science among the comparatively few who are still not free.

Science Defends Voodoo

New York.—(CNA)—Science came to the defense of Voodooism this week, declaring it much like other religions in the emotional, religious and social benefits it accords its adherents.

Reading a paper on "Haitian Magic" before the American Anthropological Association, Dr. George E. Simpson, white, assistant professor of sociology at Temple University, Philadelphia, took issue with many conceptions that have become prevalent in this country as a result of superficial "investigations" of voodooism by supercilious white writers seeking sensational material. Dr. Simpson spent nearly nine months studying voodooism in Haiti.

Later, questioned by reporters, Dr. Simpson refused to regard voodooism "as a pathological manifestation," but insisted it serves the main functions of any religion in providing "emotional relief" and escapism.

Uses Coffin Vault To

Sleep Off His "Drunk"

SUFFOLK, Va. — Residents of Pleasant Hill and especially those living near the cemetery had a very exciting experience that was brought about like this: Archie Everett, it was reported, consumed too much "state liquor" and selected a wooden coffin vault for his bed in which to sleep off his "drunk." A grave was to be dug for Frank King's remains with T. E. Cook, prominent Suffolk mortician, in charge.

When he awoke he found surrounding him, police, grave diggers, and hundreds of excited people. It was about ten o'clock when he awoke—and that was when one of the officers shook him and quickly he arose from his peaceful slumber and was sober in a "jiffy."

One of the officers asked him where the body was which had been

in the box? He replied: "I reckon God got him!"

Dr. Gatewood was 51, as TIME reported.—Ed: *June 26-39*

Sirs:

Your reference to First-nameless Dr. Gatewood (TIME, June 5, p. 54) reminds me of a familiar Negro true story of my ancestral plantation, Magnolia, near Ridgeway, S. C.

"Aunt Bino," who died 20 years ago at the age of about 90 years, bore a dozen sons, each dying in infancy. Negroes told her that their names killed them, so she didn't name her 13th son. He grew up to be known as "Nuttin" (Gullah for "Nothing"). When "Nuttin" reached 16, he disliked not having a name, so took one, and forthwith died.

CHARLES EDWARD THOMAS

Sigma Nu Fraternity
Indianapolis, Ind.